

# DAILY BULLETIN

Published weekdays by the United States Mission to the United Nations in Geneva

SEPTEMBER 21, 2006

## BUSH MEETS WITH PALESTINIAN PRESIDENT, OTHER LEADERS IN NEW YORK

Middle East issues dominate sideline talks at U.N. General Assembly..... 1

## UNITED STATES URGES PROMPT RESTORATION OF DEMOCRACY IN THAILAND

Coup has implications for U.S. assistance to country, officials say..... 2

## U.S. GLOBAL PANDEMIC ASSISTANCE NEARS \$400 MILLION

International pandemic partnership enters second year..... 3

## INITIATIVE AIMS TO HELP MILLIONS IN AFRICA ACCESS CLEAN WATER

First lady Laura Bush announces "PlayPumps" private-public partnership ..... 5

## BUSH MEETS WITH PALESTINIAN PRESIDENT, OTHER LEADERS IN NEW YORK

Middle East issues dominate sideline talks at U.N. General Assembly

Washington – On the sidelines of the U.N. General Assembly, President Bush told Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, "[T]he best way to bring peace to the Holy Land is for two democratic states living side by side in peace." He also said that "the Palestinian state must have territorial integrity" and expressed the wish for the Palestinians to have "a society in which they can raise their children in peace and hope."

Abbas thanked the president for U.S. support of the peace process and told Bush, "[Y]ou are the first American president to adopt the vision of two states living side by side." Abbas said a majority of Palestinians shared this vision. "Palestinian people desire peace and there is no power on earth that can prevent the Palestinian people from moving toward the peaceful solution," he said. Bush and Abbas spoke to reporters at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York September 20.

At a private meeting earlier, the two leaders spoke about efforts to resolve the "very difficult Palestinian political situation," according to Deputy National Security Advisor Elliott Abrams, who briefed the press after their conversation. He said Bush commended Abbas on his efforts and expressed hope he would succeed in producing a Palestinian government with which the international community could work.

The Quartet for Middle East peace, which includes the European Union, Russia, the United Nations and the United States, has said the Palestinian Authority must recognize Israel, abandon violence and terrorism and agree to respect previously signed agreements with Israel in order to win legitimacy with the international community. Abbas reiterated his strong commitment to building a viable Palestinian state. Discussions about forming a new national unity government in the Palestinian Authority were put on hold when Abbas left for the General Assembly. Abrams said Bush wants Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert to meet and re-engage, "obviously after the freeing of the Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit," with the "ultimate goal of achieving a democratic and peaceful Palestinian state." He said the two presidents discussed possible strategies to accomplish this.

Abrams also clarified that the United States, while suspending aid to the Hamas-controlled Palestinian Authority, is giving humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people through nongovernmental organizations and to agencies that are "not under the control of Hamas, of the prime minister, of the Cabinet, but rather are under the control of President Abbas."

While in New York, Bush met with several other world leaders, and Middle East developments dominated much of the discussion. On September 19, he met separately with French President Jacques Chirac and U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan. Speaking about the Iranian nuclear issue, Bush and Chirac agreed on "the desire to go with a diplomatic approach," according to National Security Council (NSC) official Judy Ansley, who later briefed reporters. According to NSC official Mike Kozak, Bush and Annan agreed on the need for "the international community to stay consistent and united on the topics, so that there was clarity as to the way forward and the way to a solution."

Also on September 19, Bush met Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa, the newly elected first Muslim woman president of the General Assembly. "They talked about women as an agent of change in the Middle East, and the need to treat women with equality and respect," Kozak told reporters. President Bush also attended a round table on democracy. During an hourlong meeting with Iraqi President Jalal Talabani, Bush expressed his continuing support for a strong government in Iraq. He expressed "confidence that Iraq will succeed, but also ... commitment on all sides to work together to help Iraq make some very tough choices," said Deputy National Security Advisor for Iraq and Afghanistan Meghan O'Sullivan.

A transcript of Abrams' briefing is available on the White House Web site.

---

## UNITED STATES URGES PROMPT RESTORATION OF DEMOCRACY IN THAILAND

---

Coup has implications for U.S. assistance to country, officials say

By Peggy B. Hu  
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- The United States is urging the prompt restoration of democracy in Thailand, administration officials said September 20.

On September 19, a group calling itself the Committee for Democratic Reform under the Monarchy as Head of State seized control of the government institutions in Bangkok and declared martial law. A spokesman for the group pledged to name a civilian caretaker prime minister within two weeks and promised elections by October 2007, after the drafting of a new constitution. Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra was in New York attending the start of the United Nations' 61st General Assembly session at the time of the coup.

"We're disappointed in the coup," White House spokesman Tony Snow said at a White House press briefing September

20. “We hope those who mounted it will make good, and make good swiftly, on their promises to restore democracy. And by restoring democracy not only means elected governments, but protected rights of citizens, including freedom of speech and assembly.”

Snow added that once Thailand restores democracy the United States will “be in a position to move forward on a free trade agreement with them.”

“There is no justification for a military coup in Thailand or in any place else. And we certainly are extremely disappointed by this action,” State Department deputy spokesman Tom Casey said at the regular department briefing the same day. “It is a step backward for democracy in Thailand. And I think it is important that that step backward now be resolved in accordance with the rule of law and democracy.”

“We very much urge that democratic elections be held as soon as possible, which is a commitment military officials have made. That commitment needs to be met and it needs to be respected. And in that process, we need to make sure that there is full respect for freedom of speech and assembly and that violence be avoided,” he continued.

Casey added that there are “consequences when these kinds of actions take place.” In light of the situation in Thailand, he said, the United States would be reviewing certain “aspects” of its relationship with the country, including the provision of financial assistance. Under Section 508 of the Foreign Operations Act for Fiscal Year 2006, the United States may not use appropriated funds to finance directly any assistance to the government of any country whose duly elected head of government is deposed by military coup or decree, with the exception of assistance to promote democratic elections or public participation in democratic processes.

The legislation permits the resumption of U.S. assistance when the president determines and certifies to the Committees on Appropriations of both the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives that subsequent to the termination of assistance a democratically elected government has taken office.

For more information on U.S. policy, see Democracy and East Asia and the Pacific.

---

## U.S. GLOBAL PANDEMIC ASSISTANCE NEARS \$400 MILLION

---

International pandemic partnership enters second year

By Charlene Porter  
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington – The United States is boosting its contributions to the international effort to combat avian and pandemic influenza, bringing U.S. contributions over the past year to \$392 million, according to a September 20 announcement by U.S. Under Secretary for Democracy and Global Affairs Paula Dobriansky.

The announcement was made in New York in conjunction with the U.N. General Assembly session one year after President Bush had announced formation of the International Partnership on Avian and Pandemic Influenza (IPAPI) at the same forum.

“We need only to look back to the SARS outbreak of three years ago,” Dobriansky said, “to understand that the social, economic and political impacts of a virulent flu pandemic could be devastating.”

In a statement from Washington, U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Mike Leavitt also endorsed the early voluntary implementation of the international regulations, and cited other examples of cooperation between the United States and the World Health Organization (WHO) in the global effort against avian and pandemic influenza.

“We are funding the Specimen Transport Fund, managed by the Secretariat of the World Health Organization,” Leavitt’s statement said. “It is a key innovation in getting samples from affected countries in a timely and secure fashion.”

Ninety-three nations have joined IPAPI, along with 20 international organizations.

Dr. David Nabarro, senior U.N. coordinator for avian and human influenza, UNICEF Director Ann Venneman and Dr. David Heymann, director of the communicable diseases cluster at the WHO, joined Dobriansky at the press conference.

## INTERNATIONAL REGULATIONS

“The World Health Assembly [WHA] has requested that WHO begin implementation of the revised International Health Regulations,” Heymann said, “this year for avian influenza and next year for the framework that will involve other diseases as well.”

The WHA unanimously adopted the revised regulations in May 2005, and they are scheduled to enter into force in June 2007.

The broadened purpose, according to WHO, is to “prevent, protect against, control and provide a public health response to the international spread of disease and which avoid unnecessary interference with international traffic and trade.” Heymann said a group of experts will meet for the first time September 25, forming a task force on avian influenza as part of the international health regulation framework.

The group will review evidence bases on containing outbreaks, stockpiling, global vaccine pandemic planning, and virus information sharing through WHO and other databases, he said.

“WHO is very pleased to be a partner in this larger partnership dealing with preparedness for avian influenza,” he said.

## NATIONAL PLANS

IPAPI was formed in response to concerns from international health experts that a highly pathogenic avian influenza virus that appeared in Southeast Asia in late 2003 has the potential to trigger a human health pandemic. The H5N1 virus now has been detected in wild birds or domestic poultry in more than 50 nations. Human cases of the disease have appeared in 10 countries, causing 144 deaths. In most cases, individual exposure to the disease has been traced to direct contact with sick poultry.

Health authorities warn that if the H5N1 virus were to mutate to become contagious among humans, a global pandemic of human influenza could result, with severe effects on human health, social structures and economic activity.

With the support of IPAPI over the last year, Dobriansky said, more than 175 nations have national plans for combating avian and pandemic influenza. Animal and human health authorities in only 40 nations had crafted such plans prior to the formation of IPAPI, according to the U.S. State Department’s Avian Influenza Action Group.

## CONTROLLING DISEASE

In collaboration with international organizations and through its own health and aid agencies, the United States is providing support and technical assistance to dozens of nations to better enable them to contain and control the disease in animal and human populations.

The U.S. departments of Agriculture, Health and Human Services, Interior and others have deployed scientists, veterinarians, public health experts and emergency response teams to affected and high-risk countries to assist in dealing with actual outbreaks or to help develop plans for potential outbreaks.

U.S. assistance also is being used to help upgrade diagnostic and laboratory capabilities in vulnerable countries, and train animal and human health specialists who will be responsible for responding to outbreaks, according to a U.S. State Department September 20 fact sheet. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has shipped about 93,000 personal protective equipment kits to 66 countries for use by responders in the field in 2006, according to the fact sheet. That effort continues as USAID works to build a stockpile of 1.5 million personal protective equipment kits, 100 lab kits and 15,000 decontamination kits for deployment as necessary in the event of future avian influenza outbreaks.

---

## INITIATIVE AIMS TO HELP MILLIONS IN AFRICA ACCESS CLEAN WATER

---

First lady Laura Bush announces “PlayPumps” private-public partnership

By Kathryn McConnell  
Washington File Staff Writer

A boy in South Africa drinks clean water from a communal faucet. (USAID photo) Washington -- The United States is partnering with two major nonprofit organizations to help bring clean drinking water to millions of people in sub-Saharan Africa. In announcing the public-private partnership September 20 in New York, first lady Laura Bush called for other partners to join the effort to help up to 10 million people access safe water by 2010 through the installation of 4,000 pumps in schools and communities.

Bush spoke at the annual meeting of the Clinton Global Initiative, held in conjunction with the opening of the 61st session of the United Nations General Assembly. Joining Bush at the launch of the initiative were leaders of the two partner organizations, Case Foundation and the MCJ Foundation.

The United States is committing \$10 million toward a goal of \$60 million to fund the initiative, called the PlayPumps Alliance, Bush said. The alliance will connect playground “merry-go-rounds” to water pumps and storage tanks, using the energy of children’s play to turn pump wheels and bring clean water above ground.

Bush said access to clean water is essential to both health and education. Without clean water, she said, people suffering from HIV and AIDS cannot take needed medications safely and their weak immune systems are exposed to water-borne illnesses. Also, water-related illnesses keep children from attending school. In particular, the daily task of finding clean water for households, usually assigned to women and girls, keeps girls out of classrooms, she said.

PlayPumps is the latest example of partnerships involving U.S. support for sustainable international development and for addressing the problems of poverty, lack of education and pandemic disease, Bush said.

One example, she said, is the President’s Malaria Initiative, launched in June 2005. By the end of September, the initiative will have reached approximately 6 million Africans through national malaria control programs, she said.

Another is the Mothers-to-Mothers project in South Africa, funded by the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief. The project helps HIV-infected pregnant women receive support to keep their unborn children HIV-free.

“Through the generosity of governments, contributions from the private sector and the leadership of the governments of developing countries, “we can succeed in helping people everywhere build a healthier, more prosperous and more hopeful world for their children,” Bush said.

The Clinton Global Initiative is a nonprofit project funded by a foundation established by former President Bill Clinton.

###